

The Mystery of The Yellow Room

By GASTON LEROUX

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CHAPTER V. (Continued.)

Larsen might be about fifty years of age. He had a fine head, his hair turning gray, a colorless complexion and a firm profile. His forehead was prominent, his chin and cheeks clean shaven. His upper lip, without mustache, was finely chiseled. His eyes were rather small and round, with a look in them that was at once searching and disquieting. He was of middle height and well built, with a general bearing elegant and gentlemanly.

Larsen turned his head at the sound of a vehicle which had come from the chateau and reached the gate behind him. We recognized the cab which had conveyed the examining magistrate and his registrar from the station at Epinay.

"Ah!" said Frederic Larsen. "If you want to speak with M. Robert Darzac, he is here."

The cab was already at the park gate, and Robert Darzac was begging Frederic Larsen to open it for him, explaining that he was pressed for time to catch the next train leaving Epinay for Paris. Then he recognized me. While Larsen was unlocking the gate M. Darzac inquired what had brought me to the Glandier at such a tragic moment. I noticed that he was frightfully pale and that his face was lined as if from the effects of some terrible suffering.

"Is mademoiselle getting better?" I immediately asked.

"Yes," he said. "She will be saved perhaps. She must be saved."

He did not add "or it will be my death," but I felt that the phrase trembled on his pale lips.

Rouletabille intervened:

"You are in a hurry, monsieur, but I must speak with you. I have something of the greatest importance to tell you."

Frederic Larsen interrupted:

"May I leave you?" he asked of Robert Darzac. "Have you a key or do you wish me to give you this one?"

"Thank you. I have a key and will lock the gate."

Larsen hurried off in the direction of the chateau, the imposing pile of which could be perceived a few hundred yards away.

Robert Darzac, with knit brow, was beginning to show impatience. I presented Rouletabille as a good friend of mine, but as soon as he learned that the young man was a journalist he looked at me very reproachfully, excused himself under the necessity of having to reach Epinay in twenty minutes, bowed and whisked up his horse. But Rouletabille had seized the bridle and, to my utter astonishment, stopped the carriage with a vigorous hand. Then he gave utterance to a sentence which was utterly meaningless to me.

"The presbytery has lost nothing of its charm, nor the garden its brightness."

The words had hardly left the lips of Rouletabille than I saw Robert Darzac quail. Pale as he was, he became paler. His eyes were fixed on the young man in terror, and he immediately descended from the vehicle in an inexpressible state of agitation.

"Come—come in!" he stammered.

Then suddenly and with a sort of fury he repeated:

"Let us go, monsieur."

He turned up by the road he had come from the chateau, Rouletabille still retaining his hold on the horse's bridle. I addressed a few words to M. Darzac, but he made no answer. My looks questioned Rouletabille, but his gaze was elsewhere.

CHAPTER VI.

In the Heart of the Oak Grove.

WE reached the chateau and, as we approached it, saw four gendarmes pacing in front of a little door in the ground floor of the donjon. We soon learned that in this ground floor, which had formerly served as a prison, M. and Mme. Bernier, the concierges, were confined. M. Robert Darzac led us into the modern part of the chateau by a large door, protected by a projecting awning—a "marquise" as it is called. Rouletabille, who had resigned the horse and the cab to the care of a servant, never took his eyes off M. Darzac. I followed his look and perceived that it was directed solely toward the gloved hands of the Sorbonne professor. When we were in a tiny sitting room fitted with old furniture, M. Darzac turned to Rouletabille and said sharply:

"What do you want?"

The reporter answered in an equally sharp tone:

"To shake you by the hand."

Darzac shrunk back.

"What does that mean?"

Evidently he understood, what I also understood, that my friend suspected him of the abominable attempt on the life of Mlle. Stangerson. The impression of the blood stained hand on the walls of the yellow room was in his mind. I looked at the man closely. His haughty face, with its expression ordinarily so straightforward, was at this moment strangely troubled. He

held out his right hand and, referring to me, said:

"As you are a friend of M. Sainclair, who has rendered me invaluable services in a just cause, monsieur, I see no reason for refusing you my hand."

Rouletabille did not take the extended hand. Lying with the utmost audacity, he said:

"Monsieur, I have lived several years in Russia, where I have acquired the habit of never taking any but an ungloved hand."

I thought that the Sorbonne professor would express his anger openly, but, on the contrary, by a visibly violent effort, he calmed himself, took off his gloves and showed his hands. They were unmarked by any cicatrice. "Are you satisfied?"

"No!" replied Rouletabille. "My dear friend," he said, turning to me. "I am obliged to ask you to leave us alone for a moment."

I bowed and retired, stupefied by what I had seen and heard. I could not understand why M. Robert Darzac had not already shown the door to my impudent, insulting and stupid friend. I was angry myself with Rouletabille at that moment for his suspicious which had led to this scene of the gloves.

For some twenty minutes I walked about in front of the chateau, trying vainly to link together the different events of the day.

When Rouletabille came out of the chateau in the company of M. Robert Darzac, extraordinary to relate, I saw at a glance that they were the best of friends.

"We are going to the yellow room. Come with us," Rouletabille said to me. "You know, my dear boy, I am going to keep you with me all day. We'll breakfast together somewhere about here."

"You'll breakfast with me here, gentlemen?"

"No, thanks," replied the young man. "We shall breakfast at the Donjon Inn."

"You'll fare very badly there. You'll not find anything!"

"Do you think so? Well, I hope to find something there," replied Rouletabille. "After breakfast we'll set to work again. I'll write my article, and if you'll be so good as to take it to the office for me—"

"Won't you come back with me to Paris?"

"No; I shall remain here."

I turned toward Rouletabille. He spoke quite seriously, and M. Robert Darzac did not appear to be in the least degree surprised.

We were passing by the donjon and heard wailing voices. Rouletabille asked:

"Why have these people been arrested?"

"It is a little my fault," said M. Darzac. "I happened to remark to the examining magistrate yesterday that it was inexplicable that the concierges had had time to hear the revolver shots, to dress themselves and to cover so great a distance as that which lies between their lodge and the pavilion in the space of two minutes, for not more than that interval of time had elapsed after the firing of the shots when they were met by Daddy Jacques."

"That was suspicious evidently," acquiesced Rouletabille. "And were they dressed?"

"That is what is so incredible. They were dressed completely—not one part of their costumes wanting. The woman wore wooden shoes, but the man had on laced boots. Now they assert that they went to bed as half past 9. On arriving this morning the examining magistrate brought with him from Paris a revolver of the same caliber as that found in the room, for he couldn't use the one held for evidence, and made his registrar fire two shots in the yellow room while the doors and windows were closed. We were with him in the lodge of the concierges, and yet we heard nothing—not a sound. The concierges have lied, of that there can be no doubt. They must have been already waiting not far from the pavilion—waiting for something! Certainly they are not to be accused of being the authors of the crime, but their complicity is not improbable. That was why M. de Marquet had them arrested at once."

"If they had been accomplices," said Rouletabille, "they would not have been there at all. When people throw themselves into the arms of justice with the proofs of complicity on them, you can be sure they are not accomplices. I don't believe there are any accomplices in this affair."

"Then why were they abroad at midnight? Why don't they say?"

"They have certainly some reason for their silence. What that reason is has to be found out, for, even if they are not accomplices, it may be of importance. Everything that took place on such a night is important."

We had crossed an old bridge thrown over the Douve and were entering the part of the park called the Oak grove. The oaks here were centuries old. Autumn had already shriveled their tawny leaves. This place, which mademoiselle found cheerful, and in which she lived in the summer season, appeared to us as sad and funereal now.

The soil was black and muddy from the recent rains and the rotting of the fallen leaves. The trunks of the trees were black, and the sky above us was now, as if in mourning, charged with great, heavy clouds.

And it was in this somber and desolate retreat that we saw the white walls of the pavilion as we approached. It was a queer looking building, without a window visible on the side by which we neared it. A little door alone marked the entrance to it. It might have passed for a tomb, a vast mausoleum in the midst of a thick forest. As we came nearer we were able to make out its disposition. The building obtained all the light it needed from the south—that is to say, from the open country. The little door closed on the park. M. and Mlle. Stangerson must have found it an ideal seclusion for their work and their dreams.

The pavilion had a ground floor which was reached by a few steps, and above it was an attic, with which we need not concern ourselves. The rooms of the pavilion were as follows.

The yellow room, with its one window and its one door opening into the laboratory.

The laboratory, with its two large barred windows and its doors, one serving for the vestibule, the other for the yellow room.

The vestibule, with its unbarred window and door opening into the park.

The laboratory, between the vestibule and the yellow room.

Besides these chambers there was a flight of stairs leading to the attic. The only chimney was the large one in the laboratory.

Before mounting the three steps leading up to the door of the pavilion Rouletabille stopped and asked M. Darzac point blank:

"What was the motive for the crime?"

"Speaking for myself, monsieur, there can be no doubt on the matter," said Mlle. Stangerson's fiancé, greatly distressed. "The marks of the fingers, the deep scratches on the chest and throat of Mlle. Stangerson, show that the wretch who attacked her attempted to commit a frightful crime. The medical experts who examined these traces yesterday affirm that they were made by the same hand as that which left its red imprint on the wall—an enormous hand, monsieur, much too large to go into my gloves," he added, with an indelible smile.

"Could not that blood stained hand," I interrupted, "have been the hand of Mlle. Stangerson, who, in the moment of falling, had pressed it against the wall and, in slipping, enlarged the impression?"

"There was not a drop of blood on either of her hands when she was lifted up," replied M. Darzac.

"We are now sure," said I, "that it was Mlle. Stangerson who was armed with Daddy Jacques' revolver, since she wounded the hand of the murderer. She was in fear, then, of some body or something."

"Probably."

"Do you suspect anybody?"

"No," replied M. Darzac, looking at Rouletabille.

Rouletabille then said to me:

"You must know, my friend, that the inquiry is a little more advanced than M. de Marquet has chosen to tell us. He not only knows that Mlle. Stangerson defended herself with the revolver, but he knows what the weapon was that was used to attack her. M. Darzac tells me it was a mutton bone. Why is M. de Marquet surrounding this mutton bone with so much mystery? No doubt for the purpose of facilitating the inquiries of the agents of the police. He imagines perhaps that the owner of this instrument of crime, the most terrible invented, is going to be found among those who are well known in the slums of Paris who use it."

"Has a mutton bone been found in the yellow room?" I asked him.

"Yes, monsieur," said Robert Darzac. "At the foot of the bed, but I beg of you not to say anything about it." (I made a gesture of assent.) "It was an enormous mutton bone, the top of which, or, rather, the joint, was still red with the blood of the frightful wound. It was an old bone, which may, according to appearances, have served in other crimes. That's what M. de Marquet thinks, who has had it sent to the municipal laboratory at Paris to be analyzed. In fact, he thinks he has detected on it not only the blood of the last victim, but other stains of dried blood, evidences of previous crimes."

"A mutton bone in the hand of a skilled assassin is a frightful weapon," said Rouletabille, "a more certain weapon than a heavy hammer."

"The scoundrel has proved it to be so," said M. Robert Darzac sadly. "The joint of the bone found exactly fits the wound inflicted. My belief is that the wound would have been mortal if the murderer's blow had not been arrested in the act by Mlle. Stangerson's revolver. Wounded in the hand, he dropped the mutton bone and fled. Unfortunately the blow had been already given, and mademoiselle was stunned after having been nearly strangled. If she had succeeded in

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wounding the man with the first shot of the revolver, she would doubtless have escaped the blow with the bone. But she had certainly employed her revolver too late. The first shot deviated and lodged in the ceiling. It was the second only that took effect."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I—A mysterious attempt is made at midnight to murder Mlle. Stangerson, daughter and assistant of Prof. Stangerson, who is at work on his theory of the dissociation of matter in a pavilion near his chateau. Pistol shots and the young woman's cries for help are heard behind the locked and bolted door of her chamber, the yellow room. The cries are answered by Professor Stangerson and Daddy Jacques, an aged servant. Aided by the concierges, Bernier and his wife, they break open the door and find Mlle. Stangerson swooning and half strangled, with a wound in her temple, but find no trace of her assailant. The only possible outlet from the yellow room is the door. The weird cry of the "tete du bon Dieu," a cat belonging to Mother Angenoux, a recluse, is heard just before Mlle. Stangerson's cries. II—Joseph Rouletabille, a reporter-detective, is introduced to the reader by M. Sainclair, the narrator of the story. Rouletabille declares the revolver was fired by Mlle. Stangerson, wounding her assailant in the hand. Sainclair is to use his friendship with M. Darzac, Mlle. Stangerson's lover, to introduce Rouletabille into the chateau. III—Rouletabille induces M. de Marquet, the examining magistrate, and M. de Malaine, his registrar, to talk about the case. The only possible point of egress from the pavilion for the murderer has been the window of the pavilion's vestibule, near which blood-stains have been found. The window, however, was found latched after the assassin's escape. A bullet hole is found in the ceiling of the yellow room.

Stomach Trouble Cured.

If you have any trouble with your stomach you should take Chamberlain's Stomach and Liver Tablets. Mr. J. P. Klote of Edina, Mo., says: "I have used a great many different medicines for stomach trouble, but find Chamberlain's Stomach and Liver Tablets more beneficial than any other remedy I ever used." For sale by Burnough & Mayfield.

PUBLIC LAND SALE.

Department of the Interior, U. S. Land Office at La Grande, Oregon, December 8th, 1908.

Notice is hereby given that, as directed by the Commissioner of the General Land Office, under provisions of Act of Congress approved June 27, 1906 (34 Stats., 517), we will offer at public sale, to the highest bidder, at 10 o'clock a. m., on the 28th day of January, at this office, the following-described land: W½ SE¼ Sec. 29, W¼ NE¼ Sec. 32, T. 1 N., R. 45 E. W. M., Serial No. 9481.

Any persons claiming adversely the above-described land are advised to file their claims, or objections, on or before the time designated for sale.

F. C. BRAMWELL, Register.
A. A. ROBERTS, Receiver.

GAME LAWS.

Any person knowing of any violation of the game or fish laws of this state, or of persons not properly keeping screens over irrigation ditches, are requested to notify JOE CLEMONS, Deputy State Game and Forestry Warden, Zumwalt, Oregon. 421f

AT NATION'S CAPITAL

Grand Juries Will Inquire Into the Panama Canal Scandal.

NO RIVER AND HARBOR BILL

Many Senators Oppose Higher Pay for President, Vice-President and Speaker.

Washington, Jan. 18.—Six Washington correspondents of out-of-town papers and a local news bureau have been subpoenaed to appear before the federal grand jury and testify, presumably in connection with statements appearing in their publications bearing on the Panama canal purchase.

In his special message to congress of December 15, regarding charges of corruption, the President announced that the attorney-general had under his consideration the form in which proceedings for libel against Joseph Pulitzer, publisher of the New York World, should be brought.

Nowhere in the government annals has such an action been taken as the government suing for criminal libel. The President in his message was most emphatic in saying that it should not be left to a private citizen to enter suit, and was particularly to state that he did not believe "we should concern ourselves with the particular individuals who wrote the lying and libelous editorials, articles from correspondents or articles in the news columns. The real offender is Joseph Pulitzer, editor and proprietor of the New York World."

An amendment in the legislative, executive and judicial appropriation bill increasing the salary of the President to \$100,000, of the Vice-President and speaker of the house of representatives to \$20,000 with \$5000 additional allowance for carriages and coachmen for the Vice-president and speaker, and increases for the judiciary aggregating \$328,500, precipitated a lively discussion in the senate.

Bornh, of Idaho, made a point of order against these increases on the ground that they involved general legislation which, according to the rules of the senate, cannot be placed on an appropriation bill in face of a single objection.

A treaty providing for extradition has been signed with Honduras by Secretary Root. The state department has declined to say whether or not the treaty is retroactive, but if it is the last haven of refuge for fugitive prisoners in the Western Hemisphere has disappeared.

Among the criminals liable to be brought back under the new treaty is John Riplinger, ex-controller of Seattle, who absconded with some \$60,000 of that city's funds. He is now living in security in Honduras.

The house committee on appropriations have included in the urgency deficiency appropriation bill, a bill of \$20,000 for the maintenance of automobiles for the White House. It was explained that Mr. Taft has indicated that he would use automobiles during his incumbency of the White House, and in order that he might have the machines at the beginning of his administration, the item was included in this bill.

The senate committee on agriculture has authorized a favorable report of the McCumber bill providing for the inspection and grading of grains. Under this bill national inspection and grading of grains is provided for and the department of ag-

riculture is authorized to fix definite grades. In addition to the present laboratories, others are to be established at Seattle, Tacoma and San Francisco and other points.

The house committee on rivers and harbors voted against a general appropriation bill for river and harbor improvements. The committee will report a bill providing for carrying on important work already begun, for surveys of urgent projects proposed and for any emergencies which may arise.

Attorney-General Bonaparte will be invited to appear before the special committee of the senate, which is considering the Culberson resolution calling for the opinion of the judiciary committee as to the authority of the President in permitting absorption of the Tennessee Coal & Iron Company by the United States Steel Corporation.

With the signing of an arbitration treaty between the United States and Austro-Hungary, at the state department, conventions of that character with more than 20 nations of the world have been agreed to. The treaty now goes to the senate for ratification.

The house committee on naval affairs has fixed the amount needed for the maintenance of the naval service during the fiscal year 1910 at \$135,662,888, as compared with \$122,662,485, the present appropriation.

China Will Not Change Policy.
Peking, Jan. 18.—Prince Ching, president of the board of foreign affairs, has assured the American and British ministers that the dismissal of Yuan Shi Kai means no change in Chinese policy, but bitterness has arisen between the British and Japanese representatives here on account of Japan's refusal to join Great Britain in her representations to Prince Ching. The British position is that Japan acts in bad faith, while the Japanese legation explains that it agreed to concur in the opinion of the majority and that a majority of the ministers favored the taking of no action in this direction.

Want Votes in New York.
New York, Jan. 18.—Imitating to some extent their strenuous English sisters, the woman suffragists of New York state began tonight at Yonkers a vigorous two weeks' campaign, covering the state as far up as Albany. The movement will wind up in two large meetings in the state capital intended to impress the state legislators with the strength of the movement. They will be held January 25 and 26.

Wreck Kills 21; Injures 30.
Glenwood Springs, Col., Jan. 18.—Twenty-one persons were killed and 30 injured, many of them seriously, in a head-on collision between a westbound passenger and an east-bound freight on the Denver & Rio Grande railroad, between Dotsero and Spruce Creek, 22 miles from Glenwood Springs, at 9:30 o'clock Friday night.

Thornton Hains Held Not Guilty.
Flushing, L. I., Jan. 18.—After deliberating for 22 hours and taking 15 ballots, the jury acquitted Thornton Jenkins Hains of the murder of William E. Annis, who was shot dead by Hains' brother, Captain Peter C. Hains. The first ballot stood eight to four for acquittal.

JANUARY 1909						
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